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## Epicurus, Menander, Terence

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There is an advantage to be gained by laying good books aside for a time. Returning to the reading of the *Adelphi* after several years I am astonished to discover not only random snippets of Epicurean thought along with word clusters of high frequency rating in the Epicurean vocabulary but also a structure of plot that rests squarely upon Epicurean doctrine. Not to keep the reader in rhetorical suspense I submit a specimen snippet herewith and forthwith: In Act IV, 602ff, Hegio offers to go and explain to Sostrata that all is well because Micio gives his consent to the marriage of Aeschinus and Pamphila. Micio declines this intervention and declares it better that he should go himself.

Hegio then delivers himself as follows: "Very kind of you. All people when things have gone against them are for some reason more inclined to be suspicious; they are prone to take all approaches as insults; because of their own helplessness they always believe that others are making game of them."

Bearing in mind that this characterization has reference to women, let us turn to the essay of the Epicurean Philodemus *On Plain-speaking*. In this work he transposes the original treatise of the master into a form that came into fashion during the intervening century: the lecturer first propounds a question and then answers it himself. In our example the question is: "What is the reason that the female sex does not welcome plain-speaking?" The answer is: "Women are more inclined to assume that they are being reproached, are more crushed by loss of face, more inclined to suspect malice on the part of those who correct them, and in general find all those things that hurt people's feelings more distressing; they are also less wary, vainer and more covetous of good opinion. They think also that the weakness of the sex has a right to be pitied and to meet with forbearance, and that there is no call for them to be reviled by the stronger. Consequently they resort the sooner to tears, thinking they are being taken down out of contempt."<sup>1</sup>

This coincidence of language and sentiment will perhaps dispose the reader to consider with willingness additional evidence of an Epicurean tone pervading the play. Fundamental for the proof of this thesis is the long conversation between the crabbed and parsimonious Demea and the smart and flippant slave Syrus, Act III, Scene 3. The former expounds to the latter his method of ethical instruction (412 ff.). This description reflects with essential fidelity the method of Epicurus. It consists in habituating the pupil to a reasoned habit of ethical choice: "Do this and shun that," or "This is

credible, that is to be set down as a fault." Syrus cuts the old gentleman short and creates real merriment by executing a parody in which he claims to pursue the same system in the training of cooks. Such tricks were not new; from the first days of Epicureanism the comedians had made game of it.<sup>2</sup>

As for the method of instruction, it is the same as that ascribed by Horace to his own father in *Satires* I. 4. Certain key-words make clear this identification. Demea said (414): 'nil praetermitto: consuefacio'; Horace wrote (105): 'insuevit pater optimus hoc me.' This is the 'habituation' or 'conditioning' of which mention has been made. As for the reasoned practice of ethical choice, this was discussed by Epicurus in a volume of major importance, *On Choice and Avoidance*.<sup>3</sup> Its practical application is neatly indicated in No. 71 of the Vatican Collection: "To all desires must be applied the test of this question: What will be the consequence for me if the object of this desire is attained and what if it is not attained?" Naturally this procedure presumes a calm and judicial frame of mind, quite inconsistent with the crabbedness and parsimony of Demea. He enjoyed too much his own severity to be single-mindedly devoted to the good of the instructed, which is a requirement of the Epicurean system.<sup>4</sup>

Incidentally, if Horace describes his father as truthfully as he does the Epicurean method, then it may be inferred that his father was an Epicurean. In this inference there is nothing intrinsically unlikely. Epicurus planned his ethical system for both sexes and all ages, slave or free. We learn from Cicero that his teaching made a clean sweep of Italy,<sup>5</sup> and when he says Italy it is significant that he does not say Rome. He means the colonies and municipia. In Rome itself, although the sect flourished, it lacked social sanction. Its chance of invading the Palatine or the Esquiline was about as good as that of nonconformity in breaking into Windsor Castle or Buckingham Palace. Cicero's notorious reluctance to admit the merit of Lucretius was quite to be expected in a man who at the time of the poet's death was eagerly hoping for election to the college of augurs, a distinctly social prize in those days; it fell to him shortly afterward. The aristocratic Calpurnius Piso, Julius Caesar's father-in-law, could afford to patronize the Epicurean Philodemus and prefer a chapel to a cathedral, but a small-town man like Cicero, not yet arrived at the highest rungs of the social ladder, could not afford to dabble in what a prim Episcopalian used to call 'fancy religions.' The student who would correctly understand the story of Epicureanism must bear steadily in mind that it was a form of nonconformity, and not to be condoned in court circles.

To return now to our mutton, it is possible to orientate ourselves with even greater precision in Epicurean doctrine. No. 67 of the Vatican Collection reads: "A

life of freedom cannot acquire great wealth, because this is not easily achieved apart from subservience to mobs or monarchs (although it really enjoys all pleasures in uninterrupted abundance), but if by some chance it does acquire great wealth, even so a man may disburse it to win the good will of his neighbor." This statement, it might almost appear, was in the mind of Menander when he sketched the character of Micio, who is revealed to have become rich through some happy chance and to be spending his fortuitous gains with open-handed generosity.<sup>6</sup> There is this flaw in his conduct, however, that his spending lacks an aim and a method, as Demea makes clear (986ff.): "The opinion those men hold of you, Micio, as an affable man and hail fellow well met, does not arise from a sound basis of living nor for that matter from a true sense of fair dealing and generosity, but from saying 'yes, yes,' from letting them have their own way and from indiscriminate spending."

Yet this inconsistency is part of a smart invention because it corresponds to a converse inconsistency in the behavior of Demea, who practices the Epicurean system of instruction while exhibiting a crabbedness and parsimony altogether incompatible with that philosophy. What Menander did, manifestly, was to make a double severance of doctrine, assigning to each brother an element of virtue and a certain portion of obliquity, resulting in a criss-cross or chiasmic characterization which makes possible the charming phenomenon of a double conversion at the end of the play.

It is unlikely that Terence was acquainted with philosophy, even with Stoicism. If he died in 159 B.C., this was three years before the Stoic Panaetius is reported to have arrived in Rome. It was in the succeeding generation that the Stoic programme of higher education for young Romans was formulated, which in the period of Cicero's schooldays was monopolizing the field. Only at a later time did Epicureanism invade the country in force. Roman Stoics cultivated a bilingual system and seem to have scorned translations. Italian Epicureans, on the contrary, offering a philosophy for the masses and not for the classes, translated diligently,<sup>7</sup> and Cicero in his old age made frantic efforts to repair the damage done by previous neglect and indifference. For example, he attacked the Epicurean stronghold of friendship, which was also friendliness, and in his *De Amicitia*, as shrewd a specimen of special pleading as ever flowed from the pen of an artful old trial lawyer, he vindicated the topic for the unfriendly Stoics on the flimsy logical ground that it was an accessory of virtue. He also cribbed a sheaf of happy thoughts from poor Epicurus and rearranged them with Roman illustrations under the title *De Senectute*, but it was the Garden, we must bear in mind, and not the snobbish Academy or the censorious Stoa, that essayed to lay the foundations of a serene and grateful old age. The rest of Cicero's philosophical volumes of his last two years were also anti-Epicurean, and although this campaign was waged at the eleventh hour it was nevertheless effective. When he had finished with his writing the Epicureans were for once and all debarred from social recognition in the capital. Tacitus and

Seneca thought Epicurus worth reading but employed an apologetic tone in quoting or recommending him.<sup>8</sup>

The interest of Menander in the theme of the *Adelphi* may be inferred to have been exceptional. He is known to have been a close contemporary of Epicurus because Strabo (638) informs us that they performed their military service together, which reminds us that Menander composed a play called the *Synephebi*, "Classmates." Their kindredness of spirit is proven by the extant writings of both. It must in this connection be borne in mind that Epicurus was bringing to Athens a new system of moral instruction for all classes and that ethics is the very stuff of comedy, especially in changing times. That Menander exploited this new education of his class-mate with much sympathy and understanding and particularly in the *Adelphi*, we may hardly doubt.

That Terence, on the contrary, imperfectly appraised the design and structure of the original play may be discerned from the intrusion of the slave-dealer scene. The kidnapping of the young lady was necessary for the story but the spectacle of a young man of good family manhandling in a public street a citizen whose sole offences were his calling and his protest against violence could only serve the end of gratifying a sadistic strain in a vulgar audience. Plautus had done well to omit the scene from his *Commorientes*.<sup>9</sup> Polypheboisboisterousness was entirely out of place in a nicely constructed play designed to exhibit the quiet Epicurean ethic in its working. The character of Aeschinus is made to seem gratuitously coarse, a fault against which Aristotle had issued a warning,<sup>10</sup> and the counterposition of his role and that of his brother Ctesiphon is thrown out of balance, rendering the subsequent reformation of either of them a bit incredible. Terence himself seems to have believed he was turning a pretty trick<sup>11</sup> but he was really incurring the condemnation of Horace for "joining the neck of a horse to the head of a man."<sup>12</sup>

The occurrence of a quotation from Menander in Corinthians 1.15.33, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," ought to serve the purpose of reminding us that the opposition of the early Church to the theatre was relaxed in the case of this friend of Epicurus. His comedies were still read in France toward the end of the fifth century; collections of his sayings circulated in translation in ecclesiastical circles both Greek and Roman; Syriac and Slavic versions are also in existence and three fragments of his comedies were found in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. Moreover, portraits of saints in mediaeval times are believed with good reason to have been styled after a likeness of the poet that survived in his manuscripts.<sup>13</sup> The facts might have been very different had he gratified his audiences with horse-play in the manner of Diphilus. The appeal of his wisdom must have been due rather to his ethical kinship with the gentle and discerning Epicurus, the most Christian in spirit of all the Greek philosophers despite his heterodox views on divine providence and the gods.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Philodemi *Peri Parrhesias*, Olivieri (Teubner), 1914, Coll. xxi-xxii.

<sup>2</sup> There is a Dissertation on the subject by Friedrich Ranke, Marburg, 1900: *Periphrasmen sive de Epicuri, Peripateticorum,*

*Aristippi Placitorum apud Comicos Vestigii.* His collections are far from being exhaustive. <sup>3</sup> Diogenes Laertius, x. 27.

<sup>4</sup> The Epicureans had a name for disinterested admonition, *kedomonike nouthetesis*. See 26, 4-7, of the work cited in note 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Tusc. Disp.*, iv. 3, 6-7. <sup>6</sup> Lines 815, 863-81. <sup>7</sup> See note 5.

<sup>8</sup> Tacitus, *Dialogus*, 31; Seneca, *Epist.*, xxi. 10 *et passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Prologue of the *Adelphi*, 9-10. <sup>10</sup> *Poetics*, xxv. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Prologue, 10-14. <sup>12</sup> *Ars Poetica*, 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Ref. for these statements may be found in an article by G. W. Elderkin in the *Amer. Journal of Archaeology*, xxxix (1935), 108-111.

<sup>14</sup> [The CLASSICAL BULLETIN is happy to announce two forthcoming papers, "Christianity and Stoicism" and "Christianity and Epicureanism." *Ed. Note*]

### A Timely Classic

BY PATRICK A. SULLIVAN, S.J.

Boston College

Euripides' *Hecuba*, for years an old stand-by in colleges, began to disappear from the classroom just when its study became most practical and stimulating. The time of war is the time to study the *Hecuba*. Its examination, diagnosis, and cure of war make this play throb with vitality today.

The *Hecuba* is a play of war, of hate, of suffering. It is a play that proclaims why there are wars, and why there will be wars. Above all, it is a play in which a solution to the war question bursts forth like light out of a night of horror: "There are wars, there will be wars; yet there can be peace." This is the author's message to a war-torn world.

Behind the revenge of a *Hecuba*, behind the horrifying retribution of a Polymestor, and behind the martyrdom of a lovely Polyxena, there is the conviction of the poet that resounds like a drum beat unceasingly through the music of the poetry. It is the refrain that man by his greed, his superstition, his hate, his political dishonesty, and his sin, brings war on himself. These are the vices that cause war. As it rushes like a wild animal throughout the world, it consumes the innocent as well as the guilty and leaves all mankind in sorrow and misery. Vicious sins thrive in a war-torn world, for men lose their ideals and forget that they are men and not animals. Through it all there is the pathetic realization that the guilty involve the innocent in their suffering.

*Hecuba* and her Trojan companions are slaves because Greece fought with Troy. *Hecuba*, a queen and a mother, becomes a fiend because war has destroyed her children. Polyxena, the innocent maiden, must die a martyr because victory has maddened the Greeks. The youthful Polydorus becomes a bloody corpse on the seashore because Troy has fallen and Polymestor would have the Trojans' gold. Polymestor stained his greedy hands with the golden metal because war destroyed his conscience. His two babies in the innocence of childhood must perish at the hands of inhuman women because war had made mothers monsters. Finally, a Cassandra must lose her virginity because war has unsteady the moral equilibrium of an Agamemnon.

Yes, motherhood, guest-friendship, purity, freedom, loyalty, the very dignity of human nature itself, pass away like a summer's day before the dark night of man-made war. Death, suffering, and doom for a Polymestor, a *Hecuba*, and an Agamemnon as well as for a Polyxena,

a Polydorus, and two babes, are the grim features of this frightful war. The planting and growing and blossoming of every degrading vice and sin find a fertile loam in war.

That, then, is what Euripides tells in this play about war and its effect on humanity. But the truth that comes as the whiff of perfume from the very midst of wartime rot and corruption is that man and not God has caused war and man can stop war. Forgiveness in place of revenge would have saved a *Hecuba*. The courageous political integrity of an Odysseus and an Agamemnon would have saved a Polyxena. Generous loyalty in place of greed would have saved a Polydorus, a Polymestor, and his children. Virtue in place of vicious superstition would have saved the whole Grecian army from murder. Chastity in place of impurity would have saved a Cassandra and an Agamemnon. Our poet preaches to all ages. "Man, be pure, be kind, be generous and loyal, love your neighbor, sin not, and war will never be." But if war comes, he holds up the red lamp of warning to all men to protect themselves from the degradation of character that can accompany war.

Such were the words of timely advice that flowed from the mouth of Euripides to his own people. The same timely advice in the same words might well be listened to with profit today in the greatest of all world wars. The *Hecuba* is, indeed, a play for wartime study and one that can certainly bring help and advice and comfort to all classical students at a time when they most need it.

The first week of beginning Latin is the hardest for the teacher. It may also be the most decisive in the career of the young Latinist. All depends on the first impression Latin makes on him. The first week may be fatal if it leaves him uncertain as to the real value of Latin, even if it does not positively dishearten him. On the other hand, it may beget in him a fund of enthusiasm that will carry him victoriously over all the difficulties which he must, of course, encounter in his study.

With this very obvious pedagogical principle to guide them, Professors Walter V. Kaulfers, Dante P. Lembi, and William T. McKibbin, of Stanford University, propose in *The Classical Journal* for October, 1942, a well-reasoned method of arousing the interest of the beginner during his first week by means of a 'Vocabulary Unit' designed to show him what we owe to Latin "in the way of contributions not only to the development of our language, but also to the building of our everyday life and customs." We gladly call attention to this excellent paper, entitled "Latin Expressions in English."

Many teachers will welcome this 'Exercise' and use it in their first contact with beginners. They may, of course, wish to vary this 'Vocabulary Unit' to some extent to suit their own convenience or fit the tastes of their own class. Alert pupils will be on the lookout for other Latin words within their own experience that are part and parcel of our English Vocabulary and convey something to them in the way of cultural enrichment. This stimulating character of the 'Unit' is one of its best features. It makes one hunt for more.

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## Editorial

'Social Values' is a recent coinage. From the time it became current it has worked like a charm throughout the educational world. It struck the popular fancy, and now we are all social-minded. We are an emotional people. Fortunately, it is also a happy coinage, for it appeals to our reason and aptly expresses the age-old fact that man is essentially a social being. The social nature of man is not a discovery of the twentieth century. 'In the beginning' God said that it was not 'good' for man to be 'alone.' Since then we are working out our destiny in cheerful cooperation with our fellow men; each is to help the other in bettering his condition. Of all the departments of human activity, that of education is the one in which the 'social values' shine to best advantage.

At the present time strenuous efforts are being made by a certain School of Education to rule out Latin and Greek as unsuited to the spirit of this social-minded millennium. They are said to yield no 'social values' whatever. This School is firmly entrenched in its castle, and as its membership is legion, so, unfortunately, its hold on the public mind is almost unbreakable.

Here, then, Greek must meet Greek. There is no need of going into detail. All that is needed is that both in theory and in practice we remain loyal to our convictions. The most valuable of all the 'social values' inherent in Latin and Greek is their singular aptness to help the young student to discover himself, his true Self, that *humanitas* which is not only the glory of the individual but also the bond and basis of all true solidarity. The concrete embodiment of this ideal, the *homo*, was adumbrated by the Greeks from Homer down, more clearly defined by Plato and Aristotle, and brought to perfection by Christianity. Of this, only a caricature is left in the minds of thousands of modern educators. It is evident what sort of 'social' value this new brand of education has for our rising generation. While losing itself in a host of means and methods of 'getting

together,' it fails to point out the common bond that binds men together into a natural community, into the family of the children of God.

To offer a substantial help in the molding of *homines*—that is the one great 'social value' of the classics on which our success in teaching hinges, the one which determines their place on our curriculum, the one which alone makes their survival as instruments of secondary education desirable and even necessary. All other 'values' that may justly be urged in favor of Latin and Greek take second rank, for left to themselves they will not prevent the breakdown of our classical instruction.

One practical conclusion springs from these simple reflections: if the teaching of Latin and Greek is our way of 'socializing' the world, our way of leavening it with that culture which is traditionally, and rightly, associated with the classics, we must, each in his own little sphere of influence, give Latin and Greek a chance to bring the young generation into a live contact with *humanitas*. It is a tough struggle, a real tug of war. Unless we throw our heart into it, even what little is left of our boasted 'classical' education will go by the board. Should not each one of us aim at being a *pars magna* in this noble enterprise?

## Tyrtæus and Simonides at the Present Moment<sup>1</sup>

By A. M. ZAMIARA, S.J.  
Milford Novitiate

You recall the story of the 'lame schoolmaster' Tyrtæus, whose stirring appeals to patriotism transmuted a despondent citizenry into heroic soldiers, eager to risk and give all for their country's sake. Three of these martial elegies have come down to us, hallowed by centuries of use as national hymns, conned by heart by Athenian youth in the days of Socrates, quoted by the orator Lysurgus as the finest expression of patriotism. They are even today "the most dynamic call to patriotism in all literature; yet withal so simple, so clear-cut, so vivid in imagery that they unfailingly at all times and everywhere stir the human heart to its depths . . . A warrior soul heroically devoted to duty and honor breathes in them." "Never has true patriotism uttered words more devoted, more inspiring, more persuasive."<sup>2</sup> The Greek is simple, redolent of Homer, rich in martial rhythms.

Among these three elegies, consisting of some thirty or forty verses each, my favorite is still the one I learned as a freshman in College thirty-three years ago. Let me give a brief summary of this vigorous battle call:<sup>3</sup>

Not the wrestler, or boxer, or runner, would I glorify in song; not a Midas, or a honey-tongued Adrastus; daring in the face of bloody battle, eagerness to meet the foe—that is true worth; that the best, the most glorious prize for a young man to carry off among his countrymen. A glory he to city and all his tribe, if he takes his stand and remains in the front line unyielding, utterly disdaining shameful flight, risking life and all, inspiring his comrades with dauntless courage by his very presence. Such a one straightway turns to flight a whole phalanx of insolent foes. If he falls fighting, he is mourned by all, extolled by all; his tomb and his fame are enshrined in undying memory here,

and his soul attains immortality beyond the grave. If he survive and return with victory, young and old shall honor him, and make him happy through all the years of life, and accord him the place of honor at all public gatherings. The loftiest peak of such excellence let every man strive to reach, and never be a slacker or a quitter.

There is but one thought in these forty-four verses: True courage alone deserves honor. The vigorous spondaic rhythm beats the drum of battle. The student will be tempted to express it in equally stirring, martial English, something after the manner of Chesterton's *Lepanto*:<sup>4</sup>

Don John of Austria has burst the battle line.  
Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,  
Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,  
Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,  
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,  
Thronging of the thousands up that labor under sea  
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.

The lot of the craven coward in exile, oppression, poverty, shame, is pictured in starkly vivid outline in another of Tyrtaeus' three odes on courage. Thomas Campbell thus translates the opening and closing verses:<sup>5</sup>

But oh, what ills await the wretch that yields:  
A recreant outcast from his country's fields,  
The mother whom he loves shall quit her home,  
An aged father at his side shall roam,  
His little ones shall weeping with him go,  
And a young wife participate his woe,  
While scorned and scowled upon by every face,  
They pine for food and beg from place to place . . .  
He shall not blush to leave a recreant's name  
And children, like himself inured to shame.

If in the war-crowded curriculum of this year the moments at our disposal are very few, our students should at least have pressed upon their attention Simonides' epitaph on the Three Hundred who died at Thermopylae, than which there is nothing simpler yet grander and more inspiring. "Tis but two lines," wrote 'Christopher North' (J. Wilson), "and all Greece for centuries had them by heart. She forgot them, and Greece was living Greece no more":

᾽Ω ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις, ὅτι τῇδε  
κείμεθα, τοῖς κείνων ρήμασι πειθόμενοι.

From beneath the soil at Thermopylae the three hundred Spartans, who fought and fell to the last man for Sparta, for Greek freedom, against the barbaric hordes of Xerxes, ask the passer-by to carry the message to their people at home, that they were true to Sparta, to the last breath, to the last man. None of them are left to bring word to their beloved: they must ask the stranger, the casual passer-by. Buried they lie in a distant land where they have fallen. They did only their plain duty as always, as any Spartan would. Their loved ones are awaiting them: each village and hamlet and home has a vacant place at table; keep going, they tell the passer-by, from place to place; tell each and every one; this word will assuage their grief: we died for Sparta, for Greece.

All this is condensed into pithy Greek. ξεῖν': the fuller Ionian form. The present infinitive ἀγγέλλειν, a word familiar to soldiers, suggests repetition: the messenger is to deliver the same message everywhere. "The Lacedaemonians": not merely the Kings or the Senate. The ὅτι-construction makes the message a direct quotation: the carrier is not to speak in his own name;

the dead themselves are the speakers: a message from the grave! There is strong verse emphasis on τῇδε: here, not in our homeland, not somewhere near our borders, not in Spartan burial ground. There is an equal stress on κείμεθα: we not merely fought and suffered, but "fell in battle and are buried here." The τῇδε is contrasted with κείνων: 'they,' our countrymen, wanted it so, and therefore we died *here*. The noun ρήμασι seems to suggest the accepted norm of conduct, the traditional spirit of the nation, embodied in its current maxims. The durative πειθόμενοι, indicates that their obedience was the result of lasting conviction, rather than a heroic impulse of the moment: they faced death because they had consistently lived up to their country's traditions.

But there is yet profounder implication in the phrase: obedience to law and custom from Homer down was obedience to the divine will; the original founders of states received their authority from Zeus; princes dispensed justice 'in the name of Zeus.' The ρήματι, then, which the three hundred revered, were the sacred will of the gods. The freedom of the Greek cities which these men died to maintain against Oriental despotism meant, as Xenophon in the *Anabasis* (III 2.13) puts it, 'bowing in adoration to the gods alone.'

"Our heart trembles even now," says J. A. Symonds, "when we read such lines as these." And Gilbert Murray: "If we could use the word 'perfect' of any work of art, it might apply to . . . the epitaph on those who died at Thermopylae." G. S. Farnell says,<sup>7</sup> "It is when Simonides speaks of those who fell in the conflict at Thermopylae that he reaches his highest strain." Not only do they reach "the highest level in their kind," says J. W. Mackail<sup>8</sup> of the epigrams of Simonides, "but a point beyond which it seems inconceivable that art can go. As faultless in form as they are noble in thought and profound in their restrained feeling, they are among the perfect things in poetry."

The heroes of Thermopylae were also fortunate in being honored with a touching threnody by the master hand of Simonides. "Glorious is their lot, beautiful their death; their tomb becomes an altar; remembrance is their due instead of mourning; sorrow is praise: such a monument neither decaying mold nor all-consuming time will ever decompose; this holy ground has become the home of glory for all Greece."

Lyrics such as these may well claim priority rights in a war-time curriculum. Could we wish for a better opportunity than that which the present war affords, to impress our students with either their intrinsic beauty or their value for life? Once again the flower of a nation's youth is being sent forth to do battle for high ideals. At such a time admiration turns into imitation. In fact, does not all vital contact with the fine things in literature lead, by an inevitable process, to emulation and reproduction? Do the classics fulfill their supreme function if their age-old verities do not burrow themselves, somehow, into the lives of those who study them? Now, then, that the war is upon us, the message of a Tyrtaeus or a Simonides, so instinct with life, needs to be reinterpreted to the men of this country and of this age. We, too, have a Thermopylae, whether we call it Bataan, or Guadalcanal, or Tunisia. We, too, need men steeled to heroic self-sacrifice on the field of

battle,—men who are ready to lay down their lives 'obedient' to God and country. We have here an instance of how the ideal worth and the practical value of the classics may blend into a harmonious effect.

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Twenty-first Annual Meeting of the Ohio Classical Conference, Oxford and Hamilton, October 29-31, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Croiset, *L'Histoire de la Littérature Grecque II*; Paris, 1914; pp. 116 and 113.

<sup>3</sup> A. Geerebaert, S.J., *Selections from the Greek Lyric Poets*; Fordham U. Press, 1939; pp. 11f.

<sup>4</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *The Collected Poems*; Burns, Oates and Washbourne, London; 1927; p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> J. A. Symonds, *The Greek Poets*; London: Black, 1920; pp. 149 and 504.

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert Murray, *A History of Ancient Greek Literature*; London: Heinemann, 1897; p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> G. S. Farnell, *Greek Lyric Poetry*; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1891; p. 200.

<sup>8</sup> J. W. Mackail, *Lectures on Greek Poetry*; London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926; p. 133.

### Sheep and Goats in Freshman Latin<sup>1</sup>

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In a brief treatment such as this I shall have to take certain things for granted without supporting them, and I should like to state first a few assumptions which I shall treat, for purposes of my discussion, as axiomatic. They necessarily include my own answers to the questions to be discussed by the speakers who follow me, answers which may well be quite different from theirs. I shall assume:

1. That freshman Latin *can* be divided into more than one section. The patent impracticability of this for most of us makes the whole subject to be discussed this afternoon an academic question figuratively as well as literally, but I shall ignore this difficulty;

2. That the primary aim of college Latin is to acquaint students, through first-hand contact with the writings of outstanding figures of the classical period of Rome, with the thoughts, ideals, civilization, culture, and literary beauties of that age. I shall ignore such objectives as teacher-training, the much over-valued 'practical' uses of Latin, and the maintenance of jobs for college Latin teachers;

3. That the student can obtain this acquaintance satisfactorily only by reading Latin;

4. That students electing freshman Latin differ infinitely in their ability to read Latin.

I now proceed to inquire into the reason for the dismaying state of affairs posited in this last assumption. It should not, of course, be the case. The linguistically inept should have been weeded out long ago, and the previous experience of the comparatively teachable survivors should have been essentially the same, and their reading ability thus roughly equal. But all too many students come to college with four years of Latin from which they have apparently acquired little but a superficial acquaintance with some aspects of Roman life and history, Greek mythology, the story of Aeneas, and, let us admit, often a pathetic enthusiasm for Latin as they know it, but practically no equipment for reading with the slightest accuracy the simplest sentence from

a Latin prose author. I believe this state of affairs results from the growing habit in the schools of attempting to run at least the third and fourth years as college rather than high school courses,—the vain assumption that two years is enough to perfect a student in the ability to read, and from then on little attention need be paid to the mechanics of the language. Apparently many pupils during the last two years of high school Latin are rarely required to translate into English anything that has not already been translated for them by the teacher; even more rarely are they required to demonstrate an exact comprehension of the language by translation into Latin. Hence, when they come to college, they are totally unable to cope with a strange piece of Latin of any degree of difficulty. Either the teacher must abandon any hope of ever making them independent, and continue in the milk-and-water compromise to which they have been accustomed, or he must start all over again with rigid grammatical training and exercises in prose composition. But both of these procedures are unfair to the rarer student who has had a good grounding in the mechanics of the language, who *can* read accurately, and is now ready for the more solid rewards of understanding converse with the great minds of antiquity.

These few should be picked out; with them one can do anything. As for the others, one has, as I say, two choices, neither very inviting. The first,—to go on as they have gone in high school (which I fear is what is too often done now for all Latin students in college)—seems to me futile. Why delude these poor victims any longer with the fallacious belief that they are reading Latin? Rather let them salvage such values as they can of second-hand acquaintance with Roman customs, civilization, and mythology, from honest courses in English translations. I confess I have little enthusiasm for such courses myself; they seem so frightfully inefficient as compared with the direct contact of reading original Latin. But at least they do not cheat the customer.

This method seems to me the only really worth-while procedure for the constitutionally inept at foreign languages who yet have a pathetic desire for acquaintance with ancient Rome, and for those to whom starting all over again is too discouraging a prospect,—especially when they have been spoiled by not having to bother about grammar for years.

But there are some sufficiently earnest and ambitious to realize their faulty training and to be willing to remedy it by a course which will frankly stress language fundamentals and accuracy of analyzing sentences. With these we may read the same authors as with the fortunate few who are well trained, but we must go much more slowly, and devote considerable time to the despised syntax, and to elementary prose composition.

How shall we divide the sheep from the goats? By an examination to see who can really read Latin and who cannot: sight translation,—it need not be difficult, but it should be real Latin with plenty of complex periodic sentences, and high accuracy of translation should be required, not just a sloppy 'general comprehension,' which ordinarily means no more than vague guesses as to what a passage is about, when sufficient

hints are given by the examiner. The good reader recognizes forms accurately as soon as he sees them, and reacts quickly and correctly. He must be able to understand precisely the meaning of a sentence without being given a limited number of possible interpretations to choose from. And if he understands it, it is surely not unfair to ask him to put the idea correctly into English; that is the only *real* test of his understanding. I should not require elegance of translation; that is one of the graces that can well be developed in the college course; but accuracy is essential.

With the students who fail to meet the high standard of our reading test we shall then form a separate class, in which, frankly recognizing that they are not ready for the higher pleasures of literature, we shall devote our efforts chiefly to developing their reading ability by constant attention to accurate identification and interpretation of forms and constructions. If they are unwilling to continue this drudgery, we shall tell them that they must abandon hope of being able to read Latin, and advise them to make the best of a course of Roman civilization or literature in translation.

Let us be honest with our students. The teacher who professes to teach Latin literature in the original to boys and girls who cannot read Latin with accuracy is just as much a swindler as the patent medicine quack or correspondence diploma-mill faker. Hypocrisy on this point may uphold our enrollments for a while, but it is bound to bring about the complete downfall of Latin in the end.

<sup>1</sup> Part of a Panel Discussion held at a meeting of the Ohio Classical Conference in Hamilton, Ohio, on October 30, 1942.

### Caesar and the Present (II)<sup>1</sup>

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By far the most significant portion of Caesar's narrative is chapters 31 to 47 of Book I, where we have the beginning of the problem of Alsace that has been so vexatious in modern times. Unfortunately, the Latin is more difficult, because the diplomatic exchanges between Caesar and the German chieftain, Ariovistus, are reported in indirect discourse. It should be read to the class in a good translation (such as that of T. Rice Holmes, or H. J. Edwards, *Caesar: The Gallic Wars*; Loeb Classical Library), and the points of view presented by the two leaders discussed, but for those who prefer to have merely the content, the following is offered.

Gaul as a whole was controlled by two rival groups, one headed by the Aedui, the other by the Averni. The Averni and Sequani had hired Germans to help them against the Aedui with the result that about fifteen thousand had crossed the Rhine. These liked the land, civilization, and wealth of the Gauls so that more came over, making a total of about twenty thousand. Ariovistus had settled on the land of the Sequani, "the best in all Gaul," and seized a third of it. Now he demanded that the Sequani cede another third because twenty-four thousand Harudes had crossed the Rhine a few months before.

The powerful Druid, Diviciacus, spokesman for the Aedui, pointed out that the land in Gaul, especially that in Alsace, where the Germans then were, was better than what they had at home and that the Gauls' standard of living was far higher. Within a few years all the Germans would cross the Rhine and the Gauls would be driven from their country.

Ariovistus had defeated the united Gallic forces in one battle and "was exercising his authority with arrogance and cruelty, demanding from every man of rank his children as hostages and inflicting upon them all kinds of cruel punishment if the least intimation of his will were not obeyed. The man was a ferocious headstrong savage, and it was impossible to endure his dictation any longer."

Caesar then gives his reasons for interference.

1. The Aedui had been recognized as brethren and kinsmen by the Roman government. Not to protect them would be a disgrace to the Roman people.

2. For the Germans gradually to form the habit of crossing the Rhine and entering Gaul in large numbers constituted a menace to the Roman people.

3. After they had conquered all Gaul they were likely to pass into the Province and thence into Italy itself. This is exactly what happened four centuries later and resulted in the destruction of ancient civilization.

Accordingly Caesar invites Ariovistus to a conference midway between their present encampments, but is haughtily refused. Ariovistus "was at a loss to understand what business Caesar or the Roman people had in his part of Gaul which he had conquered."

Caesar then sends an ultimatum:

1. Ariovistus must not bring any more men across the Rhine into Gaul.

2. He must restore their hostages to the Aedui and authorize the Sequani to do the same.

3. There must be no more acts of aggression against the Aedui and their allies.

4. If Ariovistus did not comply, in accordance with the resolution which the Roman Senate had passed three years before, that the governor of Gaul "should, so far as the public interest would permit, protect the Aedui and the other friends of the Roman people"—Caesar would not suffer the wrongs of the Aedui to go unavenged.

Ariovistus replies:

1. The rights of war entitle conquerors to dictate their own terms to the conquered,—a principle observed by the Romans themselves.

a. The Romans had no right to dictate to him.

b. The Aedui had fought with him and been defeated; therefore they had to pay tribute.

2. He would not return their hostages to the Aedui, but neither would he attack them or their allies if they kept their agreement and paid their annual tribute.

4. "As for Caesar's threat, that he would not suffer the wrongs of the Aedui to go unavenged, no man had ever fought Ariovistus and escaped destruction. Let Caesar come on when he liked: he would then appreciate the mettle of the Germans who had never known defeat, whose lives had been passed in war, and who, for fourteen years, had never sheltered beneath a roof."

At this juncture envoys to Caesar from the Aedui complained that the Harudes were devastating their land in spite of their surrender of hostages to Ariovistus, while the Treveri informed him that one hundred clans of the Suebi had established themselves on the banks of the Rhine with the intention of crossing. Caesar "considered it necessary to act at once, lest, if a fresh horde of Suebi joined Ariovistus' veteran force, it might be harder to cope with him."

Caesar accordingly moves to a place twenty-four miles from Ariovistus, whereupon the latter consents to an interview midway between them after due precautions had been taken. Caesar now repeats his original message in even more conciliatory tones and then his original demands that

1. Ariovistus should not make war on the Aedui or their allies and should restore their hostages.

2. "If he were unable to send back any of the Germans to their own country he should not allow any more to cross the Rhine."

Ariovistus replies:

1. He had only crossed the Rhine at the earnest request of the Gauls.

2. The possessions he held in Gaul had been ceded him by the Gauls and they had voluntarily given him hostages.

3. "By the rights of war he made them pay the tribute which conquerors habitually exacted from the conquered.

4. "He had not made war on the Gauls; the Gauls had made war on him. The tribes of Gaul had all come to attack him and kept the field against him, and he had beaten the whole host in a single battle and crushed them. If they wanted to try again he was ready for another fight; if they wanted peace, it was not fair of them to refuse their tribute which they had hitherto paid of their own free will . . .

5. "If he continued to bring Germans in large numbers into Gaul, he did so not for aggression but in self-defense; the proof being that he had not come till he was asked, and that he had not attacked, but only repelled attack.

6. "He had come to Gaul before the Romans. Never till now had a Roman army stirred outside the frontier of Gaul.

7. "This part of Gaul was his province, just as the other was ours. What did Caesar mean by invading his dominions."

Then Ariovistus informs Caesar that the alleged Roman alliance with the Aedui was only an excuse and that he suspected that Caesar was really "keeping his army in Gaul to ruin him." Unless Caesar withdrew his army from this region (Alsace), Ariovistus would treat him as an enemy and he knew for a fact that Caesar's death would be welcome to many of the nobles and leading men of Rome. If Caesar "withdrew and left him in undisturbed possession of Gaul, he would reward him handsomely; and whenever Caesar had occasion to go to war, he would fight all his battles for him and save him trouble and risk."

While Caesar was replying to this and insisting that he could not betray the Aedui, "and that he could not admit that Gaul belonged to Ariovistus any more than to the Roman people" he was informed that the horse-

men of Ariovistus were edging closer, and broke off the conference. Two days later when in response to a request by Ariovistus for a resumption of the conference Caesar sent two envoys, they were imprisoned.

After a hard fight Caesar was victorious and the Germans were either killed or expelled from Alsace.

A fruitful subject for class discussion (in addition to many others that readily suggest themselves) is Ariovistus' claim that he had just as much right in Alsace as the Romans. It must not be forgotten that there was no German nation or French nation then, but only Germans and Gauls, each consisting of countless more or less independent tribes.

I have tried to show why Caesar still deserves his time-honored place in secondary school education and have suggested ways of revealing to the student the intrinsic (and often contemporaneous) interest of his narrative. Rome was faced with many of the problems that beset modern nations, especially the belligerent qualities of the peoples of Germany and their passion for conquest and expansion. Rome's handling of such problems is easier to observe and understand, because the ancient world was so infinitely more limited and less complex.

As for the literary merit of Caesar, let me close with the words not of a classicist, but of a professor of English at Harvard University at the turn of the century.<sup>2</sup> "As literature the authentic work of Caesar is masterly. With unparalleled simplicity and compactness, with hardly a trace of partisan feeling, he sets forth what happened, or if you prefer what he chose that people should believe to have happened . . . From beginning to end he impresses you as a writer who knows exactly what he means to say about a commander who always knew exactly what he meant to do . . . And certainly the temper of them [his Commentaries]—firm, judicial, masterful, solidly dominant—is magnificently Roman."

<sup>1</sup> All translations in this paper are from T. Rice Holmes, *Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic War Translated into English*; 1908. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Barrett, Wendell, *The Traditions of European Literature from Homer to Dante*; New York, 1920; p. 203.

### Catholic Classical Association of Greater New York

The Catholic Classical Association of Greater New York held its second meeting of the academic year in the Auditorium of Cardinal Hayes High School, the Bronx, Dec. 5, 1942. About 125 delegates and guests attended. The address of welcome was given by the Very Rev. Msgr. Philip J. Furlong, Principal of Cardinal Hayes High School. Reports on the effect of wartime conditions on classical studies in colleges and high schools were submitted by Bro. Albert Paul, F.S.C., Manhattan College, and Mr. Robert Dallin, All Hallows Institute, and a resolution, prepared by Professor Lloyd B. Holsapple, Manhattanville College, was unanimously approved. The program of the day, which was arranged with special reference to the work of teachers in the member high schools and academies, was featured by a talk on Background Readings for the Latin Teacher, by Miss Dorothy Park Latta, Director of the American Classical League Service Bureau, and by a demonstration lesson in Cicero by third-year students of Xavier High School under the direction of Mr. E. H. McGlinchy, S.J. Slides were shown by Miss Latta and by Mother Rose, O.S.U., of the Academy of Mt. St. Ursula, and an extensive exhibit of "Aids in the Teaching of High School Latin" was arranged by the cooperation of member institutions and the officers of Cardinal Hayes High School.

